

## Expense Reimbursement Grant Utilization: A Quick Reference Guide

### Overview of the Operator Certification Expense Reimbursement Grant Program

<b>Title</b>	Operator Certification Expense Reimbursement Grant Program, Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) §1419
<b>Purpose</b>	To provide funding for certification and training costs for small drinking water systems operators
<b>General Description</b>	Provides reimbursement for the costs of training, including an appropriate per diem for unsalaried operators, and certification for persons operating systems serving 3,300 persons or fewer
<b>Utilities Covered</b>	All small community water systems (CWS) and non-transient non-community water systems (NTNCWS) serving 3,300 or fewer persons

### Benefits

<b>Who</b>	<p>Small drinking water system operators who receive training that promotes public health protection and professionalism</p> <p>Owners who are required by state regulation to maintain a certified operator at its public water system</p> <p>Customers who receive safe drinking water due to services provided by the water facility and the well-trained operator with ability to service the water facility</p>
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### Concerns

<b>States</b>	<p>Difficulty spending grant funds on reimbursement and training of small water systems</p> <p>System operators are not taking advantage of reimbursement opportunities</p>
<b>EPA</b>	<p>States' slow spending reflects minimal activities of workplan</p> <p>States' ability to spend all funds and complete activities by end of project period</p>

## Optional Provisions

### Assumptions

- ✓ States will first use grant funds to provide reimbursement for training and certification costs of small system operators serving 3,300 persons or fewer and per diem for unsalaried operators
- ✓ States should be exploring creative ways to advertise availability of ERG funds as an incentive for operators to take advantage of reimbursement
- ✓ States should consider reimbursement of training for new rules as pro-active measure
- ✓ After reimbursement of all costs has been made, States may (after notification to EPA) use any “remaining balance” funds for Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) purposes

### Other Options

- Apply for 1 year extension to grant project period
  - ✓ States need to determine if this is feasible
    - ❖ Extensions beyond 1 year are not encouraged
    - ❖ Consider if 1 year timeframe is adequate to spend all monies
  - If not . . .
- Amend ERG workplan to include new activities
  - ✓ Written proposal must meet SDWA §1419(d)
  - Or . . .
- Roll “remaining balance” funds over to DWSRF
  - ✓ State must provide 20% match on “remaining balance” funds
  - ✓ Only 31% can go to set-asides
  - ✓ Output/Outcomes must fit EPA’s strategic plan goals, objectives and subobjectives of the DWSRF grant

### Important Reminder!!!

- States are encouraged to contact their EPA state program manager or grant project officer to discuss options as early as possible